



PAULI MURRAY'S AMERICA

ELECTIVE COURSE SYLLABUS



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Elective Course Description and Overview

This semester-long elective course includes 15 Units and is anchored in the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray, a Black, Queer, legal and civil rights pioneer who broke through barriers and changed the course of history. Students immerse themselves in a primary source-based, interdisciplinary, and multimedia exploration of Murray's early life, their efforts to secure equal rights and access to education, civil rights work, and their activism through authorship.

Students explore Key Civics Themes through the lenses of race and gender, including Foundations of the United States Government, Rights and Responsibilities, Role of the Individual, Power and Politics, and Active Engagement.

As students engage with the course materials, they are learning content and skills that inspire active civic engagement, broaden their understanding of equality and the remarkable diversity of America, and help them make connections to today's world. The course culminates with a Tableau with a Follow-up Panel Assessment to process and communicate how the course has impacted their civic knowledge, skills, and mindsets, as well as how they have been inspired to make a difference for others in their communities.

All teaching materials needed for this course are available on History UnErased's designated Teacher Dashboard page for the course: <https://unerased.org/resource/pauli-murrays-america>

Note: Students taking this course will need a copy of Pauli Murray's memoir, [*Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family*](#), to engage in independent reading during the course.

About Proud Shoes: "First published in 1956, Proud Shoes is the remarkable true story of slavery, survival, and miscegenation in the South from the pre-Civil War era through the Reconstruction. Proud Shoes chronicles the lives of Pauli Murray's maternal grandparents from the birth of her grandmother, Cornelia Smith, daughter of a slave whose beauty incited the master's sons to near murder, to the story of her grandfather Robert Fitzgerald, whose free Black father married a white woman in 1840. Proud Shoes offers a revealing glimpse of our nation's history." (From Penguin Random House Publishers)

Course Goals and Objectives

1. Reflect on the historical and cultural contexts that shaped Pauli Murray's life and impact on society.
2. Identify Constitutional processes and civic responsibilities that Pauli Murray applied within American institutions to advance the ideals of American democracy.
3. Analyze how Pauli Murray effectively uses storytelling, poems, speeches, and biography to convey messages of protest and social critique.
4. Develop critical thinking and writing skills and academic debate, analysis, and creative responses.
5. Cultivate a deeper appreciation for the role that Pauli Murray played in the rights that we enjoy today.

Civic Participation Practices

- Demonstrate respect for the rights of others in discussions and classroom debates; respectfully disagree with other viewpoints and provide evidence for a counterargument.
- Work to influence those in positions of power to strive for extensions of freedom, social justice, and human rights.
- Fulfill social and political responsibilities associated with citizenship in a democratic society and interdependent global community by developing awareness of and/or engaging in the political process.

EACH UNIT DASHBOARD INCLUDES LINKS FOR ALL THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCE MATERIALS AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

UNIT 1

Learning Objective: Students recognize the multi-dimensional nature of America and the nation's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, and recognize themselves in the story of America.

Essential Question: How do the images and words we create—whether in painting or poetry—shape our understanding of America's multidimensional nature and compel us to act for a more just future?

Recommended Timeframe: 2-3 Days

Activities included in Unit 1:

- Course introduction and review of the syllabus
- Building a Nation Visual Analysis Guide to help students access prior knowledge of US History and make connections to their lives and experiences:
- Watch the trailer for the documentary
 - a. Suggestion: Have students create a K-W-L reflection
- Listen to the third track from Pauli Murray reading "Dark Testament" with the transcript.
- Students explore connections between the poem and their analysis of *Building a Nation*

Key Civics Themes:

- Foundations of the United States Government: Connecting themes in *Building A Nation* and *Dark Testament* to the growth and development of the US Government.
- Rights and Responsibilities and Role of the Individual: Students' engagement with "Building a Nation Visual Analysis" includes an introduction to the painting *Building a Nation* by artist Angela Alés, who prompts students to think about who they are, and where they are in the painting. The painting reflects figures of various shades of black, brown, and beige lifting each other up, conveying civic responsibility and cooperation.
- Power and Politics: The fight against systemic discrimination, segregation, and the enduring fight for civil rights, as explored in "Dark Testament".

- Active Engagement: The importance of solidarity and collective action in the face of oppression, as explored in “Dark Testament” and *Building a Nation*.
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UNIT 2

Learning Objective: Students recall the social and political history of the Jim Crow era in United States history and discover its effect on Pauli Murray and their family.

Essential Question: How have laws and customs supported, or limited, the ideals of American democracy, and what can Pauli Murray’s family history teach us about resisting injustice?

Recommended Timeframe: 2-3 Days

Activities included in Unit 2:

- Introduce *Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family* by Pauli Murray (1956) for students’ independent reading throughout the semester. Share the epigraph from Murray’s grandfather Robert G. Fitzgerald’s diary, dated July 26, 1867, and students reflect on its meaning to them.
 - a. “The past is the key of the present and the mirror of the future, therefor let us adopt as a rule, to judge the future by the history of the past, and having key of past experience, let us open the door to present success and future happiness. ~ Robert G. Fitzgerald, diary, July 26, 1867
- (Suggestion: Teacher reads the Introduction to *Proud Shoes* to students.)
- Introduce Jim Crow laws. Suggested options include the following:
 - a. Jim Crow Museum Virtual Tour
 - b. “Did You Know? Jim Crow Laws” from Encyclopaedia Britannica:
 - i. What is the primary difference between Jim Crow as a “system of laws” vs. Jim Crow as a “system of customs”?
 - ii. Which is more difficult to navigate and/or challenge?
 - iii. Are you aware of any “system of customs” in today’s world?

Key Civics Themes:

- Rights and Responsibilities: Using the Fitzgerald quote and the introduction to *Proud Shoes* as a launch, students can discuss the responsibilities of citizenship, and our responsibility to one another as human beings. Through a review of Jim Crow laws, students interrogate the rights of individuals and the role of the local, state, and the federal government in ensuring the rights of individuals are protected.
 - Power and Politics: Examples of Jim Crow laws as tools to oppress certain groups of people while empowering others.
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UNIT 3

Learning Objectives: Students evaluate a variety of primary sources, including oral histories, and discover examples of the beginnings of Pauli Murray’s advocacy for equal opportunities in education. Students will also

explore Murray's use of poetry as a form of protest, as well as Murray's organization of sit-ins to protest segregation while at Howard University.

Essential Question: How do individuals challenge unjust laws and systems, and how did Pauli Murray's diverse forms of activism demonstrate different pathways to social change?

Recommended Timeframe: 4-5 Days

Activities included in Unit 3:

- UnErasing LGBTQ History and Identities Podcast: Deep Dives and Backstories Season 2 Episode 1: Pauli Murray Part 1
 - a. **Why did Pauli Murray describe their family as a “mini-United Nations”?**
 - b. **In what ways did Pauli protest Jim Crow laws as a child?**
 - c. **Which course at Hunter College influenced Pauli the most? Why?**
 - d. **Describe one scene from Pauli's early life that resonated with you.**
 - e. **Why do you think Pauli wanted to don a Boy Scout uniform to travel across the country?**
- Teaching & Learning as Activism:
 - a. Students engage with primary source letters from Pauli Murray to university leaders and political figures (available on the Unit 3 Dashboard)
- UnErasing LGBTQ History and Identities Podcast: Deep Dives and Backstories Season 2 Episode 2: Pauli Murray Part 2
 - a. **How did Pauli advocate for equal access to education?**
 - b. **What happened when Pauli and Addie McBean were traveling from New York to North Carolina?**
 - c. **What did Pauli learn about the NAACP from this incident?**
 - d. **What are a few factors and circumstances that prompted Pauli to pursue a law degree?**
 - e. **What does “Jane Crow” mean?**
- Students explore the use and effectiveness of Pauli Murray's organization and participation in Howard University Sit-ins.

Key Civics Themes:

- **Rights and Responsibilities:** Connect Murray's activities to the right to peacefully protest as protected in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.
- **Role of the Individual:** Examples from Murray's life in which they took action to effect political and social change, such as through their writings and their political organizing.
- **Power and Politics:** How does Murray's activism shift the balance of power within their relationships, as evidenced by their correspondence with Bayard Rustin (for example)? What are the politics that Murray critiques within the civil rights movement?
- **Active Engagement:** Murray's direct involvement in organizing and participating in activities such as sit-ins to protest and draw attention to racial inequality.

UNIT 4

Learning Objective: Students recall the social and political history of Roosevelt's New Deal and discover Pauli Murray's efforts for the Works Progress Administration in New York City.

Essential Question: What does the federal government consider when trying to balance economic relief with inclusion and fairness, and how can individual voices like Pauli Murray's write (or rewrite) their communities into those decisions?

Recommended Timeframe: 2-3 Days

Activities:

- Introduce Roosevelt's New Deal and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) with the PBS video by Ken Burns:
 - a. How was "prosperity" understood at that time? Is prosperity understood differently today?
 - b. Was the New Deal a success? What are the indicators of success?
- Introduce Pauli Murray's work with the WPA in NYC with the Letter from Pauli Murray to President Roosevelt, December 6, 1938; pages 26-28 of *The Firebrand and the First Lady*:
 - a. How does Pauli Murray explain why they applied to the University of North Carolina despite the institution's admission policy?
 - b. What does "enlightened" mean? How has this course, thus far, enlightened you?
 - c. Where do you see the connections between Pauli Murray's critique of American democracy and today's world?
- Reflection and/or discussion prompt: What does Pauli Murray mean with the following quote: "One person plus one typewriter constitutes a movement."

Key Civics Themes:

- Foundations of United States Government: Explore Murray's connections to New Deal programs such as the WPA, and the programs' impact on American society during the Depression.
 - Rights and Responsibilities: Investigate the responsibilities of governments to protect and provide for their citizens, and the rights of individuals to peacefully protest unjust policies and laws
 - Role of the Individual: Using Murray's letter-writing as an example, discuss the ways that individuals can advocate for change and unite others in a cause
 - Power and Politics: Investigate the New Deal and its programs: who was helped by these programs? Who was left out?
 - Active Engagement: Connect Murray's activism to contemporary opportunities for activism. How might students use their writing to effect change?
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UNIT 5

Learning Objective: Students analyze the role of historical myth and learn methods and strategies to engage in independent primary source research from trusted institutions.

Essential Question: What do historical myths teach us about who (or what) is seen in America's story and why, and how can uncovering hidden stories empower us to be more truthful today?

Recommended Timeframe: 3-4 Days

Activities included in Unit 5:

- Students explore Pauli Murray's incidental activism on April 6th, 1940 arrest in West Virginia:
 - a. The Carolina Times (Durham, N.C.) article, "Jim Crow Bus Dispute Leads to Girls Arrest" April 6th, 1940
 - b. *Proud Shoes* Chapter 6: The Complex Reality of the Jim Crow Era
 - i. Why was the NAACP not able to use Pauli Murray's and Adelene McBean's arrests to fight Jim Crow laws?
 - ii. What were the possible motivations for law enforcement officials to arrest Murray and McBean for disturbing the peace and not for violating a Jim Crow segregation law?
- Rosa Parks was NOT an example of incidental activism, but rather a historical myth. The common misunderstanding, or historical myth, associated with Rosa Parks is that she had incidentally (citing being tired) refused to move her seat.
 - a. What is the benefit of this historical myth?
 - b. Why is it important to both understand the truth and also the strategy behind proliferating this historical myth, and historical myths more broadly?
- Students engage in independent primary source research to discover additional examples of incidental activism in the United States from 1910 to 1970. (Guidance for teachers to assist students is on the Unit 5 dashboard.)

Key Civics Themes:

- Role of the Individual: In March of 1940, while traveling by bus from New York City to Durham, NC, Murray and their traveling companion, Adelene McBean, were arrested in Virginia for refusing to give up their seats on a segregated bus to white passengers. Their act of incidental activism and civil disobedience resulted in them being charged for disturbing the peace and arrested; and their arrest was publicized in The Carolina Times, "Jim Crow Bus Dispute Leads to Girls Arrest".
- Rights and Responsibilities: What were the possible motivations for law enforcement officials to arrest Murray and McBean for disturbing the peace and not for violating Jim Crow segregation law?
- Power and Politics: Despite the fact that the NAACP visited Murray and McBean in jail by the evening of their arrest, the NAACP declined to take their case because they were not charged with violating the segregation law. In contrast, 15 years later, the planned strategy by the NAACP in Montgomery, AL, ignited the Montgomery Bus Boycott when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus. The common misunderstanding, or historical myth, associated with Rosa Parks is that she had incidentally (citing being tired) refused to move her seat. What is the benefit of this historical myth? Why is it important to both understand the truth and also the strategy behind proliferating this historical myth, and historical myths more broadly?
- Active Engagement: What types of civil disobedience do we see in today's world? What are the Foundations of the United States Government connected to these acts of civil disobedience?

UNIT 6

Learning Objective: Students recognize the cultural and biological limitations that prevented Pauli Murray from equal access, opportunity, and self-expression, and analyze how those limitations informed their positing of Jane Crow.

Essential Question: How do culture, biology, and law shape who we are—and how can we ensure everyone has the right to define themselves on their own terms?

Recommended Timeframe: 3-4 Days

Activities included in Unit 6:

- Lens on Endocrinology and Identity
 - a. Primary source analysis from Pauli Murray’s “Notes to Self” collection: Questions prepared for Dr. Titley. Wed. Dec.17, 1937; Memorandum on Pauli Murray; and the letter exchange between Pauli Murray and Dr. Ruth Fox in July, 1942? (The primary sources are available on the Unit 6 Dashboard).
 - i. How do Pauli Murray’s questions to Dr. Titley (1937) connect to today?
 - ii. How would you describe the “seat of conflict” that Pauli Murray mentions in question 7? “Where do you think is the seat of the conflict - in the brain, the body, the glands - or where?”
 - iii. What experiences have Pauli Murray had that might prompt (in question 19) positing “questions about race conflict”?
 - iv. Which question stands out to you in the Memorandum on Pauli Murray? The letter exchange with Dr. Ruth Fox? Why?
- Reflect on the “Pronouns and Pauli Murray” document from the Pauli Murray Center
 - a. Why do you think the topic of pronoun usage is important when studying Pauli Murray?
 - b. When we analyze the past, it is important to understand historical context and the language of the time period. What might be the dangers of assigning today’s language to the past?
- Analyze the following primary sources with the lens of understanding from Pauli’s questions prepared for Dr. Titley:
 - a. Letter from Pauli Murray to Thurgood Marshall, NAACP. April 13, 1940.
 - b. Pauli Murray’s letter to Dr. Ruth Fox. July 25, 1942. (Pauli Murray’s “Notes to Self” abruptly stopped in 1942. Why do you think that is?)
 - c. Letter from A. Calvert Smith, Howard University, to Pauli Murray. July 12, 1944.
 - d. Letter from Pauli Murray to A. Calvert Smith, Howard University. July 20, 1944.
 - e. Letter from Pauli Murray to T.R. Powell and James P. Conant, Harvard Law School, July 20, 1944.

Key Civics Themes:

Rights and Responsibilities: While in their 20s, Murray sought answers from physicians about why their own biology didn’t seem to match their desired self-expression. Students can analyze the questions Murray posed to their physicians, and identify the rights Murray was denied due to cultural and biological limitations, such as gender, race, and sexuality, as well as discriminatory laws and policies. Consider how these restrictions highlight a failure to uphold basic human rights, and how Murray’s questions might be answered today. What is our responsibility to fellow humans when it comes to supporting self-expression?

UNIT 7

Learning Objective: Students will engage with rhetorical analysis and recognize Pauli Murray's persuasive techniques in letter writing and its effectiveness.

Essential Question: How can strategic communication challenge power structures, and how does Pauli Murray use different persuasive techniques to advocate for change?

Recommended Timeframe: 3-4 days

Activities included in Unit 7:

- Teaching, Learning, and Writing as Activism:
 - a. Primary source analysis / rhetorical analysis of Pauli's arguments. One primary source per class period with guiding questions (Primary Sources available on the Unit 7 Dashboard)
 - i. Pauli Murray to Eleanor Roosevelt, May 4, 1943 (Pages 67-72):
 1. What do you think Murray means when they write, "the balance sheet of race relations is not wholly in the red...."?
 2. What collaborations does Murray describe throughout the letter? How were these collaborations advocating for equality?
 3. What does Murray suggest as potential "weapons of advancement"?
 4. What are some of the skills and techniques Murray proposes to discuss at the Leadership Institute? Do we still practice those skills today?
 - ii. Poem, "Mr. Roosevelt Regrets," Pauli Murray, July 21, 1943, and Roosevelt's response, July 26, 1943 (Pages 77-78):
 1. How would you describe the tone of this poem?
 2. What are some of the words or phrases that stand out to you? Why do you think Murray chose these words?
 3. How would you describe President's Roosevelt's response?
 - iii. Pauli Murray to President and Mrs. Roosevelt, June 4, 1944 (Pages 81-84):
 1. What are Murray's arguments related to a 4th term for President Roosevelt?
 2. Why does Murray feel that they can't vote for the Democratic Party?
 - iv. Pauli Murray to Calvert Smith, Harvard University, July 20, 1944:
 1. Why does Murray write, "One of the assets of being a brown American is patience"?
 2. What does Murray mean by "passing the buck"? Can you think of other examples in Murray's life where they appeared to someone who "passed the buck"?
 3. How does Pauli suggest that the university will benefit from accepting them?
 - v. Pauli Murray to T.R. Howard, Harvard University, June 20, 1944
 1. What "tradition" is Murray referring to at Harvard? Why (or are) traditions important?
 2. How does Murray (humorously) suggest solving this issue of their admittance to Harvard? Could Murray be admitted to Harvard Law School today?

- b. Discussion: Who does Pauli write to in order to effect change? Why does she choose those particular individuals? What do Pauli's choices in correspondents reveal about power, race, and gender in the mid-twentieth century?

Key Civics Themes:

Rights and Responsibilities: Using Murray's letters to individuals in power, consider the responsibilities of those figures to uphold the rights of others. For example, what role does (or should) the President of the United States play in ensuring the rights of Americans? What are the repercussions when they ignore or forsake those responsibilities? Students can compare and contrast presidential policies during Murray's lifetime with those of more recent presidential administrations.

UNIT 8

Learning Objective: Students will analyze Pauli Murray's legal strategies in monumental Supreme Court cases, the questions to the court in a historical context, and the lasting impact of the court's decision on society.

Essential Question: How do constitutional rights and constitutional interpretation evolve through strategic legal challenges, and what role did Pauli Murray play in expanding legal protections for marginalized Americans?

Recommended Timeframe: 4-5 days

Activities included in Unit 8:

- ***Brown v. Board of Education (1954)***: Read pages 8 - 14 in "Pauli's Bet":
 - a. What was the legal strategy Pauli Murray proposed to overturn *Plessy v. Ferguson*?
 - b. What were the questions to the court in *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)*?
 - c. What else was happening in the mid-1950s politically and culturally?
 - d. Why do you think Pauli Murray's influence and legal strategy have been left out of the *Brown v. Board of Education* story?
- ***White v. Crook (1966)***: This case challenged the jury selection process in Lowndes County, Alabama, for gender and race-based discrimination. Pauli Murray was co-counsel for this case with Dorothy Kenyon. Their authorship of their brief for the ACLU linked the civil rights and women's rights movements and successfully challenged the Alabama statute restricting jury service to white males.
 - a. What were the questions to the court in *White v. Crook*?
 - b. What else was happening in the mid-1960s?
 - c. Research the ACLU Women's Rights Project and subsequent cases using Murray and Kenyon's strategies in *White v. Crook*.
- ***Reed v. Reed (1971)***: Watch the video, "Ruth Bader Ginsburg Introduces Pauli Murray" from TIME (available on the Unit 7 Dashboard).
 - a. How did Pauli Murray influence Ruth Bader Ginsburg's legal strategy?
 - b. What were the questions to the court in *Reed v. Reed (1971)*?
 - c. What else was happening in the early 1970s relating to women's rights?
- Research Pauli Murray's legal work with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and advocacy for including "sex" in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

- ***Phillips v. Martin Marietta Corporation (1971):***
 - a. What were the questions to the court in *Phillips v. Martin Marietta Corporation*?
 - b. How did Pauli influence the legal strategy in this case?
 - c. What rights were women seeking at this time?
- What is the common denominator in all of these court cases?

Key Civics Themes:

- **Foundations of United States Government:** Students will investigate Murray's contributions to landmark Supreme Court cases, and the long-term effects of those cases in American history on issues relating to race- and gender-based discrimination in schools, workplaces, and within the legal system. Do the decisions in the cases still stand today? In what ways have the rights secured in these cases been expanded (or contracted) since the time of the original decision?
 - **Rights and Responsibilities:** Analyze the role of the United States Supreme Court in ensuring that laws and policies comply with the Constitution, and safeguarding rights and liberties by reviewing governmental actions.
 - **Role of the Individual:** In Murray's professional life, their research and authorship of amicus briefs, *Jane Crow and the Law: Sex Discrimination and Title IX*, and *State Laws on Race and Color* (regarded by civil rights leaders as the Bible of the civil rights movement) impacted an inestimable number of legal minds and activists, including Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Thurgood Marshall. How can a deeper understanding of the US Constitution... ???
 - **Power and Politics:** Examine the ways in which the Supreme Court's power to interpret the Constitution shapes the balance of power in the United States. Consider one of Murray's landmark cases (e.g. *Brown v. Board of Education*) and analyze how the Court's decision influenced politics, social norms, and the balance of power across federal, state, and local governments.
 - **Active Engagement:** Brainstorm ways to engage in community activism using Murray's work as a model. Examples could include: researching current legal challenges involving race, gender, or LGBTQ rights and writing amicus curiae briefs outline their position; creating public awareness campaigns pertain to Murray's work and/or current legal challenges; collaborating with local advocacy groups; or engaging with public officials to advocate for causes or policies that align with Murray's principles.
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UNIT 9

Learning Objective: Students will discover Pauli Murray's contributions to legal education in Ghana, and evaluate primary sources that reveal Pauli motivations for living and working abroad.

Essential Question: How can an individual reconcile believing in the ideals of American democracy while not experiencing the full spectrum of its promise?

Recommended Timeframe: 2-3 Days

Activities included in Unit 9:

- In 1960, Murray traveled to Accra, Ghana to explore their African cultural roots and teach constitutional law. While there, Murray co-wrote *The Constitution and Government of Ghana*, with Leslie Rubin. – In

what ways was this experience another opportunity for Pauli Murray to leave their mark? How did Murray's lifetime experience and resilience to being "othered" prepare them for this teaching opportunity?

- **Listen to Pauli Murray discussing their time in Ghana in an interview with Genna Rae McNeil, February 13, 1976, for the Southern Oral History Project, University of North Carolina (audio file and transcript are on the Unit 9 Dashboard):**
 1. How did Murray's experience in Ghana work to influence and solidify their political beliefs?
 2. Traveling to Ghana was the first time Murray left the United States. How do you think Murray's experiences in the United States prepared them for being the first woman to teach at Ghana School of Law?
- **Read "On Teaching Constitutional Law in Ghana":**
 1. What challenges did Pauli Murray face in building a constitutional law course in Ghana?
 2. Murray writes: "I told them I did not want them to memorize rules of law- I wanted them to learn how to analyze a legal problem and to use their own powers of reasoning. I warned them to be skeptical of everything I said about American Constitutional Law and English Constitutional Law, and to remember that they were the Jeffersons, Madisons, etc. of their day; that upon their shoulders might well rest the future constitutional history of Ghana." How might Murray's "otherness" in Ghana have influenced the approach Murray took to teaching Constitutional Law?
 3. How might Pauli Murray have reconciled the fact that Murray did not enjoy all the freedoms and liberties promised in the US Constitution but was able to educate and promote the promise of American Democracy in Ghana?
 4. At the end of Murray's time teaching a student remarked, "... We used to accept without questioning whatever the lecturer said. Through your class we have learned to inquire." What were some methods Murray used to support this independent research and inquiry?
- **Examine:** From Woodruff Archive—image of announcement of Ghana.

Key Civics Themes:

- **Foundations of United States Government:** How might Pauli Murray have reconciled the fact that Murray did not enjoy all the freedoms and liberties promised in the US Constitution but was able to educate and promote the promise of American Democracy in Ghana?
- **Rights and Responsibilities:** What are the rights and responsibilities of American citizens living abroad? What role did Pauli Murray's activism in the US play in their experience living and teaching in Ghana?
- **Role of the Individual:** How did individual Americans work to share the ideas of equality, rule of law, and/or democracy, internationally?
- **Power and Politics:** Highlight Ghana's political context in 1960, shortly after its independence from British colonial rule, and discuss how Pauli Murray's work in Ghana contributed to the country's postcolonial legal and constitutional framework and how this aligned with broader movements of decolonization and self-determination. Analyze Baldwin's writings to uncover how Baldwin's international perspective allowed him to reimagine systems of justice and equality. Consider the ways in which systemic racism, colonialism, and homophobia shaped the lives and work of Murray, Baldwin, and Rustin.

- Active Engagement: Ask students to examine how multiple identities (e.g., race, gender, sexuality) affect civic engagement. Students can create multimedia projects (e.g., videos, podcasts) to explore how these intersections impact political representation today.
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UNIT 10

Learning Objective: Students will connect McCarthyism (the Red Scare) with the Lavender Scare and explore possible reasons for Pauli Murray and their contemporaries to be under federal investigation.

Essential Question: How does fear shape government action, and what justifications might the government have to deprive individuals of their rights?

Recommended Timeframe: 3-4 Days

Activities included in Unit 10:

- Explore the FBI files on Pauli Murray and their contemporaries:
 - a. Bayard Rustin
 - b. James Baldwin
 - c. Eleanor Roosevelt
 - d. Thurgood Marshall
 - e. Pauli Murray
- Pauli Murray was denied a position with the State Department at Cornell University because their references, including Eleanor Roosevelt and Thurgood Marshall, were considered “too radical.” Based on your research into the FBI files, what was perceived as “radical”?
- Watch The Speech that Launched the 1950s Red Scare / McCarthy. PBS (4:57).
- Watch the movie trailer for The Lavender Scare: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuIYssjmlv0>
- Cite a primary source included in Unit 10 that is an example of one of the following: The federal government’s attempt to impose conformity; government overreach; attempt to discredit ideas the government and people in power find threatening; fear of an informed citizenry.

Key Civics Themes:

- Foundations of United States Government: Explore the Red Scare, the fear of communism that led to widespread government crackdowns on suspected radicals, anarchists, and communists, and the Lavender Scare, which targeted LGBTQ individuals, particularly in government employment, under the belief that they were security risks susceptible to blackmail. Investigate the ways in which both scares highlight how the U.S. government, at times, diverged from its foundational principles by using its power to surveil, control, and discriminate against citizens. Consider the struggle to balance security and personal liberty throughout history. What personal liberties do we forfeit in order to support our national security? (TikTok!)
- Rights and Responsibilities: Investigate how these scares conflicted with the First Amendment’s protections of free speech, and the principles of equality protected under the Fourteenth Amendment.
- Role of the Individual: Examine the different ways in which individuals like Murray, Baldwin, Rustin, Roosevelt, and Kameny, resisted unjust policies, and advocated for the protection of their (and others’)

rights. How did activists, like Frank Kameny, who fought against government discrimination, embody the responsibility to advocate for civil rights despite personal risk?

- Power and Politics: Explore the idea of a “moral panic,” and investigate how societal fears in the 1950s were weaponized by the federal government to enforce conformity and marginalize vulnerable populations, including LGBTQ individuals, undermining democratic inclusivity. Make connections to these scares and Murray’s attempts to find employment with the federal government.
 - Active Engagement: Research contemporary parallels (for example, post-9/11 surveillance and security policies) and analyze how rights and responsibilities are negotiated today. Host a debate on the balance between security and civil liberties, using the Red Scare and Lavender Scare as case studies.
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UNIT 11

Learning Objective: Students will analyze how different forms of oppression affect individuals differently based on their identities, and explain Pauli Murray’s critiques of the civil rights movement from the perspective of Murray’s identities.

Essential Question: How do overlapping identities create unique experiences of oppression, and what can Pauli Murray’s concept of ‘Jane Crow’ teach us about building more inclusive movements for justice?

Recommended Timeframe: 3-4 days

Activities included in Unit 11:

- Read pages 11-13 in “Pauli Murray: Overcoming Jane Crow.”
 - a. What is Jane Crow, and how does Pauli Murray argue that it is manifested?
 - b. In the speech, Pauli Murray argues that “Negro women should seek to communicate and cooperate with white women wherever possible.” Do you agree with this assessment? Explain your reasoning.
 - c. How have the relationships between a) Black women and Black men, and b) Black women and White women changed since 1963?
- Introduce Audre Lorde:
 - a. Read, or listen to, Lorde’s poem, “There Is No Hierarchy of Oppressions”:
 - i. What does Audre Lorde mean by, “There is no hierarchy of oppressions”?
 - ii. In what key way(s) does Audre Lorde’s philosophy differ from that of Pauli Murray in regard to the oppression that Black women (and lesbians) face?
 - iii. How does the idea of intersectionality challenge the way society often categorizes discrimination (e.g., race vs. gender vs. sexuality)?
- Introduce Lorraine Hansberry:
 - a. Read pages 15-16 in “Pauli Murray: Overcoming Jane Crow.”
 - i. What unique experiences of women and Black people in the United States does Hansberry raise in her letter?
 - ii. How do the experiences mentioned by Hansberry connect with Pauli Murray’s definition of “Jane Crow”?
- Primary Source analysis of Pauli’s critique of the civil rights movement through primary source letters, and the list of demands from the March on Washington and NOW. Read pages 3-10 in “Pauli Murray: Overcoming Jane Crow.”

- a. List of Demands for the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, and the 1970 Women’s Strike for Equality.
 - i. In what areas do the demands of both the 1963 March on Washington For Jobs and Freedom and the 1970 Women’s Strike for Equality intersect with one another?
 - ii. What did Black women in particular stand to gain from both of these demonstrations?
- b. “Feminism and Equality” by Bayard Rustin, August 27, 1970, and Personal Letter from Pauli Murray to Bayard Rustin, September 9, 1970.
 - i. What are some of Bayard Rustin’s critiques of the women’s rights movement?
 - ii. What are some of Pauli Murray’s critiques of the Civil Rights Movement?
 - iii. What is Pauli Murray’s solution for resolving these differences today?
- Reflection and independent writing prompt.
 - a. Ask students to think about examples of Jane Crow today. Are the experiences mentioned by Hasberry, Lorde, and Murray still features of everyday life for women and people in the United States? (Use the article, “Foster Care as Punishment: The New Reality of Jane Crow” as an example for students.)
 - b. Independent writing prompt: What examples have you (students) seen, or experienced, as examples of Jane Crow today. Follow Pauli Murray’s method from “Notes to Self” and questions for doctors.

Key Civics Themes:

- Foundations of United States Government: Review the 14th Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause. How does it address the intersecting oppressions that Pauli Murray critiqued? How do identity-based movements, such as the feminist movement and civil rights movement, shape U.S. government policy—now or at different points in the past?
- Rights and Responsibilities: Every individual is entitled to civil rights, but historical and systemic barriers have limited access based on race, gender, and other identities. Examine the gaps in civil rights advocacy and who was excluded.
- Role of the Individual: Murray argued that the civil rights movement largely centered on race while sidelining gender and other intersecting oppressions. Analyze Murray’s arguments and cite evidence from your knowledge of the civil rights movement to support Murray’s claims.
- Power and Politics: Discuss the ways in which Pauli Murray challenges traditional power structures. Consider how political systems influence the fight for rights and justice, and how political decisions today reflect (or don’t) past struggles for rights.
- Active Engagement: Consider current fights for equality. What current movements reflect Pauli Murray’s vision of inclusive justice? Draft an inclusive civil rights policy that addresses some aspect of intersectional oppression.

UNIT 12

Learning Objectives: Students will cite evidence to support whether they agree or disagree with Pauli Murray’s strategy, which Murray proposed to Kennedy’s Commission on the Status of Women to advance the rights (and power) of women.

Essential Question: How can legal strategies challenge political realities in the pursuit of gender equality?

Recommended Timeframe: 3-4 Days

Activities included in Unit 12:

- Pauli Murray served on President Kennedy’s Commission on the Status of Women from 1961-63 with Eleanor Roosevelt. Pauli argued in favor of using the 14th Amendment, not the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), to secure equal rights (and power) for women. Pauli asserted that the ERA would not be ratified if poor women and Black women were included.
 - a. Read II. Pauli Murray’s ERA in Congress, 1970; and III. The Making of Pauli Murray’s Vision for the ERA from the Virginia Law Review article by Julie C. Suk, published January 29, 2021.
 - b. Have students prepare to debate what they believe would be effective today: work towards the passage of the ERA; or, argue for equal rights and treatment for women using the 14th Amendment. Students prepare three (3) supporting arguments for their position. (Suggestion: use a “speed dating” activity to allow for one-on-one debates and encourage active listening skills by having students recast what they heard their partner state.)

Key Civics Themes:

- Foundations of United States Government: President Kennedy signed Executive Order 10980 to create the President's Commission on the Status of Women. Research the role of executive orders: how do executive orders interact with the separation of powers and checks and balances? What legal or political challenges have been raised against executive orders in the twenty-first century?
 - Rights and Responsibilities and the Role of the Individual: While serving on Kennedy’s Commission on the Status of Women, Pauli shared their belief that the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) would never be ratified if poor working women and Black women were included. What do you think? Prepare to debate what you believe: Work towards the passage of the ERA; or, argue for equal rights and treatment for women using the 14th Amendment.
 - Power and Politics: By analyzing Murray’s position on the ERA, students can consider how legal frameworks and politics influence the pursuit of equity. How did Murray, and others, advocate for systemic change within existing power structures?
 - Active Engagement: Consider when the ERA was finally ratified. What are the next steps to adding the ERA as an Amendment to the U.S. Constitution? How can students participate in that process?
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UNIT 13

Learning Objective: Students will explore the role of fashion and its relationship to gender identity using primary source photos of Pauli Murray, and analyze Murray’s poetry and quotes and their connections to civic participation and mindset. Students will analyze Pauli Murray’s poetry to explore themes of race, gender, and inequality, examining how Murray used literary expression to challenge social injustices.

Essential Question: How can personal expression become political resistance, and how did Pauli Murray use fashion and poetry to challenge rigid social categories and advocate for justice?

Recommended Timeframe: 3-4 days

Activities included in Unit 13:

- Fashion: Photo analysis of the different ways Pauli presented themselves at different times in their life (from “Imp” to Sainthood). Using photographs of Murray from different points in their life, describe how their evolving identity showcases the struggle for self-definition in a society that often enforces rigid norms on race and gender.
- Poetry and Quote Analysis

Key Civics Themes:

- Rights and Responsibilities: What rights do individuals have to self-expression, and how have those rights changed over time? Consider Supreme Court cases such as *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969), *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* (2018), and *Mahanoy Area School District v. B.L.* (2021).
 - Suggestion for additional learning: UnErasing LGBTQ History and Identities Podcast, Season 6, Episode 1)
 - Role of the Individual: Identify passages from Murray’s poetry that provide evidence of Murray’s efforts to challenge injustice. How can one individual’s voice help to shape public discourse?
 - Power and Politics: Students research and create a timeline of how clothing has been used to challenge power structures, or as a form of protest. (e.g. 19th-century masquerade laws, Suffragettes wearing white, Black Panther Party jackets and berets, Hilary Clinton’s pantsuits, etc). How does clothing communicate political messages?
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UNIT 14

Learning Objectives: Students will analyze possible motivations for Pauli Murray to transition from lawyer to priesthood and the implications of Murray’s Sainthood; explore mental health considerations as they reference Murray’s father in *Proud Shoes* and primary sources from “Notes to Self;” and engage in independent reflection and group discussion about *Proud Shoes*.

Essential Question: How do personal struggles and/or religious beliefs shape an individual’s capacity to advocate for justice?

Recommended Timeframe: 2-3 Days

Activities included in Unit 14:

- Religion and Sainthood: Watch *Yale Psychiatry Grand Rounds: "Showing Up Whole: Pauli Murray's Courageous Life"* from 19:00 to 44:40.
 - a. How would you describe Pauli’s appreciation of the church, religion, and/or spirituality?
 - b. How would you describe Pauli’s perception and understanding of gender?
- Group discussion about *Proud Shoes*
 - a. How does Pauli reference their father in *Proud Shoes*? How did Pauli introduce the subject of mental health considerations?
 - i. Reflect back on Pauli’s “Notes to Self” and letters to doctors. How did Pauli reference their own mental health? What might have been contributing factors to Pauli’s “terrific breakdowns”?

- b. How does Murray use personal and family history to challenge mainstream historical narratives about race in America?
- c. How does Murray blend memoir and history to make larger arguments about race and identity?
- d. How do different characters use education as a form of empowerment and resistance? How does this connect to current discussions about access to education and systemic inequality?
- e. How does Murray's family history influence their lifelong activism?

Key Civics Themes:

- **Rights and Responsibilities:** After discussing Murray's thoughts on their transition to priesthood, discuss: How legal and religious institutions shape ideas of justice and responsibility? What are the ethical responsibilities of individuals working in law and activism? How does Murray's sainthood impact how we view civic engagement and moral leadership?
 - **Role of the Individual:** Students research and discuss various pathways to civic engagements. How can individuals use different platforms (law, religion, literature) to create social change? What civic roles are available for people beyond traditional political activism? Students create a personal diagram mapping their skills, values, and potential civic roles they see for themselves (e.g., advocate, writer, teacher, organizer).
 - **Power and Politics:** Students identify and analyze the different forms of power Murray wielded to accomplish their work: legal, literary, religious, symbolic (as a saint). How do law and religion each shape political and social power? Murray's father's struggles (as explored in *Proud Shoes*) highlight historical stigma and disparities in mental healthcare, especially for Black Americans. How does mental health intersect with civil rights and policy decisions?
 - **Active Engagement:** *Proud Shoes* offers a deeply personal narrative of identity, privilege, and oppression. Students will reflect on their own experiences with inequality. In what ways can students apply Murray's legal, literary, or spiritual activism to current issues? What local or global movements reflect Murray's intersectional approach to justice, and how can students contribute to those movements?
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UNIT 15

Learning Objectives: Students collaborate in small groups to synthesize their learning throughout the course with a focus on the civic-based knowledge acquisition, skills, actions, and mindsets. Students will express how this course changed their worldview and how the course has inspired them to take action in their community

Essential Question: How has studying Pauli Murray's life and activism shaped your understanding of civic engagement, and what actions will you take to continue their legacy of justice in your own community?

Recommended Timeframe: 4-5 days

Summative Assessment: Create a Tableau and Follow-Up Panel Discussion:

"[Creating] tableaux vivants is often referred to as a playful pastime, but it has also provided a great amount of purpose in the cultural history of the United States. Translated from French, tableaux vivants means 'living pictures.' The genre peaked in popularity between 1830 and 1920. During a performance of a tableau vivant, a cast of characters represented scenes from literature, art, history, or everyday life on a stage. After the curtain

went up, the models remained silent and frozen for roughly thirty seconds. Particular emphasis was placed on staging, pose, costume, makeup, lighting, and the facial expressions of the models. Sometimes a poem or music accompanied the scene, and often a large wooden frame outlined the perimeter of the stage to reference the frame of a painted canvas.” (From Art Museum Teaching)

Suggested Concluding Activity is to watch the “My Name Is Pauli Murray” documentary, streaming on Amazon Prime, and engage students with the post-viewing Film Discussion Guide.